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While this guide is designed to help you complete various communication projects, we know that questions can come up.

The staff in Strategic Communications (StratComm) are always available to assist with any writing, editing, website development and/or creative needs. For general questions or support, please contact the appropriate representative below.

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Editorial style refers to a set of conventions that editors use to help with consistency across publications. The College of Liberal Arts uses the Associated Press Stylebook, which should be referred to unless otherwise noted.

**ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

Avoid using abbreviations unless they are universally recognized (e.g., AIDS, GPA, NASA, IBM, SSN, RSVP, ASAP, CEO, SAT).

If necessary, spell out the organization’s name on first use, followed by the abbreviation in parentheses if you intend to use the abbreviation later in the document.

**ACADEMIC DEGREES**

When referring to degrees in general, avoid acronyms, lowercase and use an apostrophe: bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, etc.

Use bachelor’s degree instead of baccalaureate.

B.A., B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. can only be used after a person’s full name and set apart with commas: Pamela Matthews, Ph.D., is the dean of the College of Liberal Arts.

Capitalize full and formal names of specific degrees: Bachelor of Arts, Doctor of Philosophy

Use doctoral as an adjective and doctorate as a noun: She received her doctoral degree last Saturday. She received her doctorate in English.

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS, PROGRAMS, AND MAJORS**

Capitalize if referring to a specific department or other academic unit by its proper name: Department of English, Honors Program.

Capitalize majors only if proper noun: English, history.

**ACADEMIC TITLES**

Lowercase and spell out titles when not used with a person’s name: The dean gave her staff the week off.

Capitalize and spell out when the title precedes a name: Chancellor John Sharp met with Dean Pamela Matthews yesterday.

Long titles are more readable when placed after a name: Terry Dickson, vice president for business and administration, nominated the work-study student for an award.

**COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS**

Spelled out and capitalized on first reference. Refer to it as Liberal Arts thereafter.

**CLASS YEAR**

Lowercase: first-year student, sophomore, junior, senior.

When referring to an alum in text, include the last two digits of his or her class year after the name with an apostrophe: Mike Smith ’08.

When referring to an alum with multiple degrees, list the degrees in the order in which they were received: “The campus has changed since I was a student,” said John O’Reilly ’44 ’46 (M.A.).

**DATES**

Days

Always spell out days of the week.

Use Arabic figures, without st, nd, rd, or th.

Months

When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate only Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec.

Spell out the name of a month when it stands alone or with the year only: The events of December
EDITORIAL STYLE

2006 are provided in this document.

Years
Put a comma before and after the year when used with month and date: The celebration on Dec. 31, 2016, will be exciting.

Decades
Use numerals to indicate decades of history: The Roaring ’20s.

Centuries
Lowercase century, spelling out numbers less than 10: the first century, the 21st century.

DIRECTIONS/REGIONS
Lowercase north, south, northeast, northern, etc. when they indicate compass direction: The cold front is moving east.
Capitalize compass points when they designate U.S. regions: A storm system that developed in the Midwest is spreading eastward.
With names of countries, lowercase compass points unless they are part of a proper name or are used to designate a politically divided nation: northern France, Northern Ireland.
Capitalized compass points when used in denoting widely known sections: Southern California, Lower East Side of Manhattan.

FAQ
Frequently asked questions. Spell it out in copy: The website has a section on frequently asked questions.
If abbreviated in a headline, use all caps and no apostrophe to make it plural: FAQs

FISCAL YEAR
Do not capitalize when spelled out: She planned to give all of her lottery winnings to the university in fiscal year 2017.
When abbreviated, capitalize with no periods: FY 2017.

GPA/GPR
Grade point average/grade point ratio. Abbreviation is acceptable in all cases.

GRADES
Use a capital letter when referring to a grade. When plural, use an apostrophe: She made all A’s last semester.

HOLIDAYS AND HOLY DAYS
Capitalize. (Note that Spring Break is also capitalized.)

LEGISLATIVE/LEGISLATIVE SPECIAL ITEM
Do not capitalize unless it begins a sentence.

LEGISLATURE
Capitalize in all references to a particular legislative body: the Texas Legislature.
Lower case when it’s used as a generic term: The law-making body in democracy is called a legislature.

NAMES
Use full names on first reference. On second reference, use last name only.
If two people in the story have the same last name, use their full names throughout.
A person who prefers to use a middle name may be listed with his or her first initial followed by the full middle name: R. John Doe. When listing two initials, there is no space between the initials: R.J. Doe.
Middle initials should be used in names when provided and/or when the individual prefers it that way: John J. Doe.
If the person prefers a nickname, it may be included in quotation marks between the first
and last names: William “Bill” Doe. In less formal documents, the nickname may be used without the full first name. Do not set off Jr., Sr., II, or III with commas: John Doe Jr.

NOBEL PRIZE

The correct designations are Nobel Prize in physics, physiology, or medicine. But it’s Nobel Peace Prize and Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics. A person who has received the Nobel Prize is a Nobel laureate. Use “received” or “was awarded” instead of “won.”

NUMBERS

Generally, spell out numbers one to nine in text, and use numerals for 10 and higher. Use either all numerals or all words when several numbers appear together in a passage. Spell out numbers when they begin a sentence.

Ages

Always use figures: The 17-year-old student took graduate-level courses. The dean is in his 50s. Her daughter is 6.

Approximations

Large, round, even numbers used as approximations are spelled out: The history spans some four thousand years.

Credit Hours

Use numerals to refer to credit hours: 3 credit hours

Fractions

Spell out fractional amounts less than one using hyphens: two-thirds, one-eighth

Grades

Write figures for grades 10 and above, and spell out first through ninth.

Percentages

Always spell out: 10 percent. (Note the % symbol can be used in scientific, technical, and statistical copy.)

Telephone Numbers

Use a hyphen and no parentheses: 555-123-4567.

PUNCTUATION

Apostrophe

Add an apostrophe to create the possessive. For plural nouns ending in s, add only an apostrophe: the students’ grades For singular common nouns ending in s, add ‘s: the witness’s answer For singular proper names ending in s, use only one apostrophe: Dr. Jones’ mission For singular proper names ending in s sounds such as x, ce, and z, use ‘s: Marx’s theories Don’t use ‘s for plurals of numbers or multiple letter combinations: the 1960s, ABCs For grades, capitalize, and use an apostrophe before the s if plural: She made all A’s last year.

Colon

Use a colon to introduce a list: I’m taking four classes: communication, political science, anthropology, and psychology. Use a colon to introduce a complete sentence that expands on the original sentence: We learned a sad lesson that day: Studying should not wait until the night before a final. Use a colon for emphasis: I know what this recipe is missing: Nutella. Use a colon to introduce a quotation if that quotation is longer than one sentence. Otherwise, use a comma: George R.R. Martin reportedly said: “Some writers enjoy writing, I am told. Not me. I enjoy having written.”

Commas

Use commas to separate elements in a series, including one before the “and”: red, white, and blue Use a comma to introduce a complete one-sentence quotation within a paragraph: Dr. Bryant said, “The pollen samples are ready.”
Use a comma instead of a period at the end of a quote that is followed by attribution: “I love teaching Shakespeare,” Dr. Estill said.

Commas always go inside quotation marks.

Use a comma to set off an individual’s hometown and/or age when it is placed in apposition to a name: Rebecca Miles, Belton, and Jennifer Post, Temple, were there. Monika Laird, 22, is from California.

Em dash (—)
Can be used in place of commas, parentheses, or colons to enhance readability.
Use with a space before and after the dash: Integrity – A Texas A&M core value – is central to the character of the university.
The shortcut in Word is Alt+0151

Hyphens
In general, when two or more words modify a noun, use hyphens: He works full time. He has a full-time job.
Do not hyphenate compounds that include “very” or adverbs ending in “-ly”: a very delicate procedure, an expertly performed operation.
Suspend hyphens in a series: Do you want first-, business-, or economy-class tickets?

Semicolon
Use to link two independent clauses with no connecting words: They couldn’t make it to the final; they were too tired.
Use with however or therefore: He wanted to protest; however, his friends talked him out of it.

SPACING
Do not insert spaces or periods in initials that serve as proper nouns such as LBJ or JFK.
Only single space between sentences. Double-spacing is from the days of the typewriter.

STATE/FEDERAL
Capitalize when referring to a governmental entity, but not when referring to geographical areas or systems/theories of government: The Federal government is not always a supporter of the federal system. The current State budget is the largest in history.

STATES
Do not abbreviate any states, according to the newest edition of the AP Styleguide.

SUPERSCRIPTS
Avoid, as they cause formatting issues: 1st, 2nd, 3rd.

TIME OF DAY
Use numerals with a.m. and p.m. and words with o’clock: 5 a.m. and five o’clock.
Use noon and midnight instead of 12:00 a.m. or 12:00 p.m.

TITLES
In all cases, capitalize the principal words including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters.

Academic Courses/Majors Titles
Do not italicize or use quotation marks. Capitalize only if they are also a language or nationality.

Composition Titles
Italicize book titles, movies, plays, television shows, magazines, long poems, record albums, works of art, and journals.
Use quotation marks for titles of academic papers or journal articles.

Committee Names
Capitalize the names of committees: The Academic Affairs Committee will meet tomorrow.

Extension Agent
Uppercase extension agent when used as a title before a name: Extension Agent Tasha Boggs is a 2005 graduate.
In other uses, uppercase Extension (because it refers to the agency name) and lowercase agent: She attended the annual meeting of all Extension agents in College Station.

Military Titles
Capitalize a military rank when used as a formal title before an individual’s name.
On first reference, use the appropriate title before the full name of a member of the military. On second reference, do not continue using the title before the name. Use only the last name. Spell out and lowercase a title when it is substituted for a name: Gen. David Petraeus is the top U.S. commander in Iraq. The general endorsed the idea.
For firefighters and police officers, use the abbreviations listed when a military-style title is used before the name. Add police or fire before the title if needed for clarity: police Sgt. William Smith, fire Capt. David Jones.
For retired personnel, do not use Ret. instead use retired just before the rank and name: They invited retired Army Gen. John Smith.

UNITED STATES/U.S.
Spell out as a noun, abbreviate with no space between the letters as an adjective.

URLS
Web addresses should be kept online whenever possible.
Use the shortest URL possible.
If it’s necessary to break a web address, do so before a form of punctuation (i.e., hyphen or period) or after a slash. Do not add a hyphen at the end of a line.
If an internet email address falls at the end of a sentence, conclude with a period or other end punctuation.
When a link must be active, make sure the hyperlink destination doesn’t include the final punctuation, which can result in a broken link.
12TH MAN
Do not use superscript in reference to the 12th Man Foundation or the tradition of students standing during athletic events.

ADJUNCT
Refers to a temporary faculty appointment. It is lowercase.

ADVISER/ADVISOR
Use the spelling that ends in -er instead of advisor, unless the -or spelling is part of an official title.

ALUMNI, ETC.
Alumnus: singular male
Alumni: plural male or both male and female
Alumna: singular female
Alumnae: plural female
When in doubt, use alum or alums.

CAPITAL/CAPITOL
Capital refers to the city; capitol refers to the building where the seat of government is housed. Capitol building is redundant.

CHAIRMAN
Use chairman or chair in references to positions on the Board of Regents, even for female members: She was also co-chair of an ad hoc committee. (Note that co-chair is hyphenated.)

CO- WORDS
No hyphen: coauthor, codirector, coworker

COURSE WORK
Two words, no hyphen.

dean’s list
Lowercase with apostrophe.

EMERITUS, ETC.
Honorary title bestowed upon select retired faculty members.
Emeritus: singular male
Emerita: singular female
Emeritae: plural female
Emeriti: plural male or both male and female

FACULTY
When used as a collective noun, faculty is singular: The faculty at A&M is known for preparing students for graduate school.

FUNDRAISING/FUNDRAISER
One word, no hyphen.

GAMEDAY
One word.

GIG ‘EM
Two words. Capitalize and use inverted apostrophe.

HALF STAFF/HALF MAST
Flags are lowered to half staff, not half mast.

LAND-GRANT UNIVERSITY
Hyphenate when used as an adjective.

LECTURN/PODIUM
You stand on a podium and behind a lecturn.

MATRICULATE
Means to enroll, not to graduate. Use sparingly in external communications.

NONPROFIT
Not non-profit.
EDITORIAL STYLE  TRICKY WORDS

STUDENT EMPLOYEE
Preferred over student worker.

TAILGATE
One word.

VICE PRESIDENT
Not vice-president.

WORK-STUDY
Not work study or workstudy.

WORDS THAT END IN -wide

collegewide, systemwide, campuswide, statewide, nationwide
The College of Liberal Arts is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for faculty, staff, and students. This has been adapted from the Diversity Style Guide, available online.

In general, a person’s race, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, disability, age, or sexual preference shouldn’t be mentioned unless it’s relevant to the story.

Check with the subject of the story on which term they prefer in all cases.

**AGE**

Avoid referring to someone as elderly, aged, or old. Use older people. Geriatric is applied to medical treatment for the elderly: *geriatric hospital.*

**DISABILITY SENSITIVITIES**

Always use people-first language, such as *person with disabilities* instead of *disabled person,* *person with dyslexia* instead of *dyslexic person,* etc.

**Afflicted with/Stricken with/Suffers from/ Victim of**

These terms assume the person with a disability has a reduced quality of life. Avoid these, and simply state facts: *He has muscular dystrophy.*

**Alzheimer’s Disease**

A progressive and fatal disease in which the nerve cells in the brain degenerate and brain matter shrinks, resulting in impaired thinking, behavior, and memory. Not simply *Alzheimer’s.*

**Asperger’s Syndrome**

An autism spectrum disorder, where common behaviors include difficulties in social interaction and obsession with specific topics. Not simply *Asperger’s.*

**Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorders**

A group of complex disorders related to brain development. Symptoms include difficulties in communication and social interaction and repetitive patterns of behavior. Some people prefer to be called an *autistic person,* while others prefer *person with autism.*

**Blind/Limited Vision/Low Vision/Partially Sighted/Visually Impaired**

Many people with vision loss are not considered blind. Unless the person refers to himself or herself as legally blind, the terms *low vision, limited vision,* or *visually impaired* should be used.

**Cerebral Palsy**

Spastic cerebral palsy is a common type of cerebral palsy in which the movements of people with the disorder appear stiff and jerky. It is acceptable to refer to someone as having spastic cerebral palsy, but it is derogatory to refer to someone as *spastic* or a *spaz.*

**Congenital Disability**

A person who has a congenital disability has had a disability since birth.

**Deaf/Deaf-Mute/Hard of Hearing**

Use *speech and/or hearing disabilities* instead. *Hard of hearing* is almost always acceptable.

**Defect/Birth Defect**

Avoid using these terms when describing a disability.

**Down Syndrome**

A congenital condition caused by the presence of an extra full or partial copy of chromosome 21 in an individual’s cell nuclei. Not *Down’s syndrome.*

**Dwarf/Little Person/Midget/Short Stature**

Little People of America recommends using the descriptors *short stature, little person* or *someone with dwarfism.*

**Epilepsy/epileptic fit**

A chronic neurological and developmental disorder characterized by recurrent, unprovoked seizures. Use *person with epilepsy* instead of *epileptic person,* and use *seizure* instead of *fit* or *epileptic fit.*
Handicapped
Avoid using, and instead refer to the person’s specific condition. Use accessible parking instead of handicapped parking.

Huntington’s Disease
A fatal genetic disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain, deteriorating a person’s physical and mental abilities. Not simply Huntington’s.

Muscular Dystrophy
Can refer to any of more than 30 genetic diseases characterized by progressive weakness and degeneration of the muscles that control movement. MD is acceptable on second reference

Non-Disabled
Non-disabled or does not have a disability are acceptable terms when referring to people who do not identify as having a disability. In general, avoid using able-bodied.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
An anxiety disorder characterized by unreasonable thoughts and fears that lead to repetitive and often ritualized behaviors and compulsions. OCD is acceptable in second reference.

Paraplegia/Paraplegic
The impairment or loss of movement in the lower extremities and torso. Avoid referring to an individual as a paraplegic. Instead say the person has paraplegia.

Parkinson’s Disease
A chronic and progressive movement disorder involving the death of vital nerve cells in the brain. Not simply Parkinson’s.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
An anxiety disorder that can develop after traumatic events. Use PTSD on second reference. The term flashback may be used to denote reliving an event that triggered PTSD.

Quadriplegia/Quadriplegic
Defined as paralysis of all four limbs as well as torso. Use person with quadriplegia rather than quadriplegic.

Schizophrenic
A severe and chronic mental illness characterized by distorted recognition and interpretations of reality, affecting how an individual thinks, feels, and acts. Avoid using schizophrenic as an adjective, and instead say a person diagnosed with schizophrenia or living with schizophrenia.

Special/Special Needs/Functional Needs
The word special in relationship to those with disabilities is now considered offensive because it stigmatizes that which is different. The term functional needs is preferred.

Tourette Syndrome
A neurological disorder characterized by tics, or sudden purposeless and rapid movements or vocalizations. Terminology is varied, but prominent mental health organizations refer to it as Tourette syndrome, with no possessive or capitalization of syndrome.

Wheelchair/Wheelchair-Bound/Confined to a Wheelchair
It is acceptable to describe a person as someone who uses a wheelchair, scooter, or cane, followed by an explanation of why the equipment is necessary, but only if it is relevant to the story. Avoid wheelchair-bound or confined to a wheelchair.

ETHNICITY AND RACIAL SENSITIVITIES

African American/African-American/black
Some black people do not identify as African American, including those who identify as Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latino, and African immigrants in the United States. Hyphenate when using as an adjective, as in African-American president. Lowercase black.

American Indian/Native American/native-born
When possible, it is best to refer to Native people by their specific tribe or nation, such as Navajo, Hopi, or Cherokee. Use native-born to describe someone who is born in the United States but is not American Indian.
Asian/Asian American/Asian-American
Asian is as broad a term as European, as 60% of the world's population lives in Asia. Use Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, etc. Hyphenate when using as an adjective, as in Asian-American cuisine.

Caucasian/white
Capitalize Caucasian but lowercase white.

Hawaiian/Native Hawaiian
An ethnic group referring to a person of Polynesian descent, but should not be used for everyone living in Hawaii. A possible alternative is islander. A Native Hawaiian can trace their lineage and language to Polynesians, including Tahitians, Maoris, and Samoans. The federal government now recognizes Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders as a distinct group.

India/Indian American
Use Indian or person from India to refer to a person with ancestral ties to India. Use Indian American to refer to a U.S. permanent resident or citizen with ancestral ties to India.

Indigenous/aboriginal groups
People who originate from a specific area. Indigenous is the preferred term.

Mexican American/Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Tejano
Hispanic is an umbrella term referring to a person whose ethnic origin is in a Spanish-speaking country, as well as residents/citizens of the United States with Latin American ancestry (except Brazil, which is not a Spanish-speaking country). It is an ethnic term. Use Mexican when referring to anyone of Mexican citizenship, and use Mexican American when referring to those of Mexican ancestry who are permanent residents or citizens of the United States. Latino/latino is an ethnic umbrella term for residents or citizens of the U.S. with Latin American Ancestry. A Tejano is a Texan of Mexican descent.

Pacific Islander
Referring to one of eight groups: Fijian, Guamanian, Hawaiian, Northern Mariana Islander, Palauan, Samoan, Tahitian, and Tongan.

People of Color
Acceptable use as a synonym for minorities.

GHETTO, INNER CITY
Synonymous terms for sections of cities inhabited by poor people or minorities. Avoid due to negative connotations. Use the word urban, or the name of the neighborhood, section, district, or quarter.

HOLOCAUST
Always capitalize when referring to the Holocaust during World War II.

ILLEGAL ALIEN/ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT/ILLEGALS
Avoid. Use undocumented worker or undocumented immigrant instead.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
Use this instead of foreign student.

RELIGIOUS SENSITIVITIES

Arab
Refers to a nation or people from an Arabic-speaking country, and is not synonymous with Muslim.

Catholic/catholic
Capitalize when referring to the branch of Christianity headed by the pope, the Roman Catholic Church. In lowercase, the word is a synonym for universal or worldwide, such as he has catholic tastes in art.

God/G-d
Capitalize in reference to monotheistic religions, or references such as God the Father, Holy Ghost, and Holy Spirit.

Lowercase personal pronouns such as he or him, although avoid gender-defining pronouns when possible. Orthodox Jews write G-d to avert the sin of defacing God’s name, so if quoting an Orthodox Jew, use that same spelling.
**Islamic/Muslim**
An adjective used to describe the religion of Islam. *Muslim* is a noun and is the proper term for individual believers.

**Koran/Quran**
*Quran* is the preferred spelling and is always capitalized.

**Religious Holidays**
Christmas: A major Christian holiday marking the birth of Jesus Christ. Use *holiday* or *holiday break* instead of *Christmas* or *Christmas break*. Never abbreviate with *Xmas*.
Easter: A major Christian holy day marking Jesus Christ’s Resurrection from the dead three days after his Crucifixion.
Good Friday: The Friday before Easter.
Hanukkah: The eight-day Jewish Festival of Lights.
High Holy Days: A 10-day period beginning with Rosh Hashanah, which marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year, and ends with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.
Holy Thursday: In Christianity, the day before Good Friday.
Holy Week: In Christianity, the week that begins with Palm Sunday and ends with Easter Sunday.
Lent: The period of penance and fasting preceding Easter.
Palm Sunday: The sixth Sunday in Lent.
Passover/Pesach: A major Jewish holiday commemorating the freedom of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
Ramadan: Islam’s holy month, during which Muslims fast from sunup to sundown.
Rosh Hashanah: The Jewish New Year
Yom Kippur: The Jewish Day of Atonement, which takes place on the 10th day of September or October.

**THIRD WORLD**
Originally used to distinguish nations that were aligned with neither the West nor the East during the Cold War, and now commonly describes underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Use the term *developing countries* instead.

**FRATERNITIES/SORORITIES**
The term *Greeks* or *Greek organizations* is acceptable. Avoid the term *frats*.

**SEXUALITY AND GENDER SENSITIVITIES**

**Gay**
Refers to men who are attracted to other men; preferred over homosexual. When referring to gay men and women, use gays and lesbians.

**Hemaphrodite**
Avoid. Derogatory term for intersex individuals.

**LGBT/GLBT/LGBTQ/LGBTQQIA***
LGBT is an abbreviation for “lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.” Useful in headlines and short ledes, but should be explained in the first or in an early reference. The Q in LGBTQ can stand for either questioning (still exploring one’s sexuality) or queer, or sometimes both [and it is sometimes written LGBTQQ]. LGBTQ is best used only in quotations or for formal names of organizations or events. [In recent years initials have been added to represent Intersex, Asexual, Pansexual, Polyamorous. LGBTQIA and LGBTQQIA, sometimes with a * at the end, are increasingly being used to represent the community.]

**Straight**
Heterosexual; describes a person whose sexual and affectional attraction is to someone of the opposite sex. As a noun, use *heterosexual* or *straight person*.

**Transgender/transsexual/transvestite**
Transgender refers to individuals whose gender identity and/or expression may not match their physical, sexual characteristics or sex assigned at birth. Ask which term the source prefers. Do not use the term *transgendered* and don’t use *transgender* as a noun. Instead say *transgender people, transgender man, or transgender woman*. If headline space is limited, using *trans* as a shorthand for the adjective is acceptable. DO NOT use the antiquated terms *transsexual* or *transvestite*.
SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

The use of social media in communications is continuously expanding, maximizing outreach to target audiences. It captures the dynamic conversation of the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University. Remember, when you refer to the college, you are representing both the college and the university. All new college-branded social media account requests should be reviewed and approved by the college’s strategic communication team prior to account creation.

BEST PRACTICES OVERVIEW

Assume everything you are posting is public, will be available online forever, and will spread further than you may intend.

Your personal views are your own. On college pages, only post content that reflects the College’s brand and messaging.

Be careful and accurate. Always fact-check and review spelling and grammar before posting.

Know privacy policies and protect your private information.

Protect your passwords. Only allow those who are posting on the page access to the password.

Review your account on desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.

Creating a social media strategy is important to focus your efforts for each of your channels. You can use the outline below as a guide to begin your strategy, and you are always welcome to contact the strategic communication team for further assistance.

MY SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Account(s)/Platform(s): ____________________________________________________________

Primary Audience: _______________________________________________________________

Secondary Audience: ______________________________________________________________

Goals/Audience:

1.

2.

3.

Measurement: What are your Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the success of your social media efforts? You should have one metric per goal.

1.

2.

3.
BEST PRACTICES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Post what your audience wants to see, not just what you want to post.

Maintain a conservative posting schedule, but be strategic and avoid posting just for the sake of posting something.

Vary your content (texts, links, photos, graphics, videos, etc.).

Use a call-to-action (questions, links).

Use a casual tone, and think of it as a two-way conversation. Invite audience participation with games, trivia questions, user-supplied content, etc.

Monitor posts; don’t post and run.

Respond to questions and comments.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM ELEMENTS

PROFILE PHOTO

This image displays in multiple sizes across the channel, so it must clearly communicate what your group is and/or does. This should be your department, center, institute, or program logo, but it must display well with the cover photo and on its own in the feed. Contact the strategic communication team for your logo if you do not have it or are unsure what to use.

Rules for a Successful Profile Photo

Use correct dimensions to avoid distortion.

This image will be displayed at a smaller size in the feed. Test to make sure it’s recognizable in the smaller form.

Avoid including your account name in your profile photo, as it always appears alongside your account name.
COVER PHOTO (OR HEADER)

Make the most of your cover photo; it’s your page’s prime real estate. Keep in mind that in some platforms, text or other elements will overlay your cover photo, so choose one that works well with these elements.

Rules for a Successful Cover Photo

Use images that convey a story and that are compelling for the viewer.

Use the correct dimensions.

Add text if needed, but keep in mind readability at various sizes for both desktop and mobile devices.

Keep text short and clear. Avoid URLs, as they are not active links in a photo.

REVIEW YOUR ACCOUNT

Most people use social media platforms on their mobile devices. However, just because your profile cover photos look good on your desktop doesn’t mean they’ll look the same on all devices. Review your account on desktop, tablet, and mobile platforms. Then make adjustments as needed.
TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL POSTS AND CONTENT

Text
Include clear, short caption. Add a call to action, or link in the caption when appropriate and possible. Use a live URL.

Image
Consider the use of high-quality, attractive, and relevant images to enhance the performance of posts. Use correct image dimensions to avoid distortion or cropping. Do not distort or stretch photos to fit. If a URL is included in the image, make sure to also include it in the text caption.

Hashtags
Consider using an established Texas A&M hashtag to extend your reach. Look at A&M’s or the college’s accounts for examples. If you’re establishing a new hashtag for twitter, Instagram, or Facebook for a particular program or event, plan in advance so you can thoughtfully promote the hashtag through various communications. It is recommended to use the college’s hashtag #tamuliberalarts to leverage the strength of the brand and enhance the exposure of the college.

Timing
Consider your audience’s behavior, as well as what’s happening in your audience’s community. After you’ve posted a few times, analyze which posts did better, and determine if the engagement was due to the timing. Also consider not posting during times of crisis or newsworthy events.

Proofread
Double-check posts before publishing, and follow our editorial guidelines.

Monitor
Watch your post for a few days to observe engagement and answer questions.
The College of Liberal Arts identity is made up of icons/images, colors, and typography. Each of these elements of the logo must be maintained as presented in this Identity Toolkit. Managing the correct reproduction and use of our logo will help ensure that the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University is viewed as a world-class liberal arts program.

**LOGOTYPE**

The words “Liberal Arts” and “Texas A&M University” are used with the block ATM icon to form the approved logos for the College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University. The typeface used in the logos, as well as any images, lines, or icons, are specifically designed and should NEVER be retyped. The spacing, height, and all other dimensions have been carefully considered, and any alteration will harm the integrity of the brand. Two versions of the Liberal Arts logo have been designed and approved to fit various applications.

**DIMENSIONS**

The spacing, height, and all other dimensions and word placement in our logos have been carefully considered as design elements, and any alteration will harm the integrity of the brand. If the logo must be resized, the ratios of height, width and spacing must be maintained. Any pulling, squeezing, or resizing of individual logo elements is not allowed.

**COLORS**

The logos shown here show the acceptable uses of color. Approved colors for any Liberal Arts logo are Aggie Maroon, black, and white – **no exceptions**. All logos must appear in all black, all maroon, or all white. Aggie Maroon is the only acceptable maroon to be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PANTONE AGGIE MAROON</th>
<th>Coated</th>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>C 27</td>
<td>R 93</td>
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<td>B 37</td>
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<td>K</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>K 69</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
LIBERAL ARTS IDENTITY
For use on all promotional and marketing materials, such as brochures, websites, flyers, posters, and email signatures.
Only the university's primary mark may appear in a rectangle.
If you need access to the college's logo, please contact the strategic communication team.

Appropriate use of the white logo on a textured background.
Do not use any Liberal Arts logos within the boundaries of a rectangle.
The examples given here show unacceptable usage of the Liberal Arts logos. Always use the files provided directly from the strategic communication team.

DO NOT stretch or distort the logo. When resizing the logo, make sure that it always retains the exact ratios of height, width, spacing, etc.

DO NOT rotate the logo.

DO NOT retype or attempt to reproduce the logo.

DO NOT reposition the elements of the logo.

DO NOT use the logo in colors other than Aggie Maroon, white, or black.

DO NOT place the college, department, or program logo in a rectangle.
The individual department and program identities are made up of icons/images, colors, and typography. Each of these elements of the logo must be maintained as presented in this Identity Toolkit.

**LOGOTYPE**

The words “Liberal Arts,” “Texas A&M University,” and the department and program names are used with the block ATM icon to form the approved department/program logos. The typeface used in the logos, as well as any images, lines, or icons, are specifically designed and should NEVER be retyped. The spacing, height, and all other dimensions have been carefully considered, and any alteration will harm the integrity of the brand.

**DIMENSIONS**

The spacing, height, and all other dimensions and word placement in the department/program logos have been carefully considered as design elements, and any alteration will harm the integrity of the brand. If the logo must be resized, the ratios of height, width and spacing must be maintained. Any pulling, squeezing, or resizing of individual logo elements is not allowed.

**COLORS**

The logos shown here show the acceptable uses of color. Approved colors for any Liberal Arts logo are Aggie Maroon, black, and white – no exceptions. All logos must appear in all black, all maroon, or all white. Aggie Maroon is the only acceptable maroon to be used.

**DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM IDENTITY**

For use on all promotional and marketing materials, such as brochures, websites, flyers, posters, and email signatures.

If you need access to your department or program logo, please contact the strategic communication team.
All printed correspondence materials that will be received by anyone outside the College of Liberal Arts must use the University-approved design. This includes:

- Business Cards
- Letterhead
- #10 Stationary Envelopes (to match letterhead)
- #10 Commercial-Grade Envelopes
- #10 Commercial-Grade Window Envelopes
- #9 Commercial-Grade Envelopes

As of January 2018, all printing and copying services may be purchased under departmental delegation. Individual departments will be responsible for monitoring their materials to ensure A&M marks, logos, or other branding is in compliance with the University Brand Guide. For any branding questions, please contact the strategic communication team.

Official stationary items, such as business cards, letterhead, and envelopes will still be available for purchase through the AggieBuy punchout catalogue. All orders anticipated to be in excess of $10,000 must be routed through Procurement Services for bidding.